

Dana Havens  
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DDS Cuts

My name is Dana Havens. I am a Developmental Service Worker 2.

Thank you to the co-chairs, Senator Osten, Senator Formica, and Representative Walker, and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee.

I am testifying today to urge the committee to reject the \$25 million in cuts that the Governor has proposed to DDS. The Governor's proposed budget continues to rely on privatization of State Group homes.

The people residing in DDS public sector group homes have mentality levels of infants, to toddlers and young children. Not funding these homes fully is equal to ripping their homes apart and taking away their staff. This is taking them away from their loving family.

When the state met with public guardians about privatization of their homes, they were told that nothing would change.

The popular term used for this population is "Special Needs" That term is used for a reason. Public sector direct care workers receive regular, extensive training - it's part of our collective bargaining agreement with the State. Our residents have special Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy needs. Professional consults are very expensive. It is also nearly impossible to find a service that will accept Title 19 patients. Unfortunately, due to the poor pay private sector workers receive, there is a high staff turnover rate which disrupts clients' lives.

As someone who loves the people I care for, I know that cutting their services is not the way to solve the state's financial problems. This population of people with disabilities requires consistent staff and stable home environment for them to flourish. They deserve the right to receive skilled care in the setting of their choice. It's important to keep group home residents where they thrive.

The population of people with disabilities - whether they are provided care by the public or private sector - also deserve to have caregivers in both sectors deserve high quality training and a living wage.

I urge you to disregard the cuts requested in the Governor's budget and work with us going forward to find a way to help us provide the best care to our families.